



## **Arlington Council on Aging**

### **Minutes**

**April 15, 2020**

Attendance: Mary Huang, Jill Greenlee, Michael Quinn – COA Board President, Rick Fentin, , Anne Brown, Sheila Connerney, Laura Liscio, Kristin Shah – COA ED, Ann Fitzgerald, Nancy, Pat Baillieul

Associates: Raul Raia, Mara Collins, Bob Tosi, Karen Nichols

ASA Liaison: Malcolm Hamilton

*Minutes from April 15, 2021*

1. Call to order at 6:03pm
2. Citizen's Open Forum – one was present to speak in the Citizen's forum
3. Minutes of the March, 2021 meeting for approval – Pat moved to approve and Anne Brown made a second motion. The minutes were approved.
4. Executive Director's Report
  - I. COVID-19 Vaccine Updates
    - a. As of April 8, 450 Arlington residents, age 65+ have been fully vaccinated through HHS run clinics (2-dose Moderna Vaccine); this was over 8 clinics at the high school . Getting to the high school was a challenge for some, but there were van rides (one person at a time!). MBTA ride was helpful as well.
    - b. All interested residents (540) of AHA senior housing buildings have been fully vaccinated (2-dose Moderna Vaccine).
    - c. One final 2<sup>nd</sup> dose Moderna clinic is scheduled for April 14 where 101 older adults, age 60+ will be fully vaccinated.
    - d. Half of our list of 85 homebound residents have been fully vaccinated (J&J vaccine was received for homebound resident list); but 15 individuals were not vaccinated because of the J&J pause. There is no information yet about how to move forward with these individuals. The COA staff was accompanied with some EMT staff. The board's own Mara Collins helped to call these vaccine recipients and help organize these appointments.
    - e. Thanks to a grant from MAPC, we have been scheduling taxi rides for Arlington residents who are able to secure a vaccine appointment outside of Arlington.
    - f. Thanks to a grant received through Mass Service Alliance, we have a group of trained volunteers who are assisting residents with navigating online websites to secure vaccine

appointments. We are finding that vaccine appointments still take effort to schedule, but are becoming more available.

II. Updates on Programs/Services

- a. All 55 Chromebooks and 21 hot spots have been distributed to older adults in town as a part of our Technology Lending Library program. We have a waiting list established so residents can borrow the items once they have been returned. Some things have been returned and can now be recirculated.
- b. Virtual programs are robust and still growing. We held our 2<sup>nd</sup> Sage Table event last week since the first was such a success in November. May is full of patriotic programming including a virtual "Fashion and First Ladies" seminar and a Memorial Day history program. We are also having a virtual Stroke presentation with a Mt. Auburn geriatric doctor (May is Stroke Month). Caregiver support group, Low Vision Group, LGBTQIA+ group, Yarn & Yarn Group, various virtual exercise classes and Sing groups are thriving. All of these virtual offerings will continue as we eventually ease back in to in person offerings. It is likely that the COA will offer virtual events or alternatives moving forward, even when there are in person events.
- c. We are launching a walking club in June. This will be the first "in person" offering we have had since the pandemic began. We will start with 10 preregistered older adults meeting for a distanced walk at McClennen Park on Summer St.
- d. We continue to get calls regarding AARP Tax prep. We have told all callers that we aren't able to hold in person tax appointments at this time and are encouraging them to have their taxes done elsewhere if they can. If they can't, Pat helps them file a deferral and we will hopefully be able to meet with them in person to help with their taxes this summer.
- e. \$10,040 was distributed to applicants who applied for the Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief Fund for Q4 property tax bills. This leaves a \$3,000 balance in the account which will be added to if residents make donations over the next year. Hopefully new donations from Arlington residents will allow for similar levels of funding next year.
- f. Our Senior Property Tax Work off program and Harry Barber program are full with 25 participants and all have begun accumulating their volunteer hours.
- g. The COA helps everyone fill out the vaccine information for everyone they help get a vaccine. This is time intensive but critical help.

III. Age Friendly/Dementia Friendly

- a. Thank you to those who attended our Dementia Friends training in March. We had 16 participants including various town department representatives. If you weren't able to attend and would like to participate in a DF training, visit <https://dementiafriendsma.org/find-dementia-friends-information-session>. There are other options to take a training;; Beth Solzberg does these trainings.
- b. COA Social Work Intern, Ashley Cheetham, is updating the printed resource guide for Older Adults in Arlington. Updating this guide assists with both Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly goals. If you have any suggestions for new resources for older adults in Arlington, please send them to Kristine.
- c. Our complete Age Friendly/Dementia Friendly Action plan is due this summer. We will plan on convening the Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly sub committees in May and

June for this effort. The group can look at the template that Kristine has set up and then divide up the sections Belmont can offer some guidance as they have just submitted their plan.

#### IV. Financial Updates

- a. Our social workers have been seeing an increase in the amount of financial need from our older residents. There are more asks to help with basic needs such as paying rent, utilities, tax bills or medical expenses. Thankfully, our Sussman account was funded with \$5,000 dollars more than last year, thanks to our generous donor. We typically pay approved need through the Sevoyan Personal Needs (\$300 max per year) and then pay any balance through the Sussman account (typically up to \$1,200). We also work closely with the COVID relief fund and fuel assistance funds. Because of the increase in need, our Sevoyan account is almost depleted for the fiscal year. I plan to get a head start on asking the board to approve additional Sevoyan funds being transferred for FY22 and will present at the May meeting. We have seen a decrease in Sevoyan Dental need, likely due to the pandemic, so that account will not need additional funds for FY22.
  - a. Rick asked about the increase the need. Kristine said there is huge need related to COVID but that gets sent to the town Covid fund. If there is a reoccurring need then the COA taps into Sevoyan and Sussman (the social workers also send folks to Minute Man, help them apply for affordable housing, etc.). The Sussman funds have run out for the year (a quarter earlier); other funding has been pulled together from grants. However, Kristine will request for Sevoyan fund earlier than normal. This increased level of need may not go away.
- b. Grant Application Updates
  - a. CDBG FY22 grant applications: Transportation Program (\$31,540), Volunteer Coordinator Position (\$52,922) and Adult Day Health scholarships (\$6,000). – *approved by Department of Planning & Community Development, Public Hearing scheduled for 6pm on April 14.*
    - a. The process is moving forward and looking good.
  - b. \$5,000 from I'm Still Here Foundation for Dementia Friendly Virtual Exercise Classes- *Accepted to 2<sup>nd</sup> round, final grant will be submitted by due date of April 15.*
    - a. Our very own Paul Raia was a great help in getting this grant together. This will offer some new programming if the COA gets the grant. We should here in May.

#### V. Capital Campaign

- a. We have a draft of the mailing where we highlight the COA's involvement in the pandemic efforts, vaccine efforts and how we have evolved since March 2020. The mailing will be sent as a last push to our fundraising goal of \$300,000 (\$151,000 raised to date).
  - a. The mailer highlights how the COA pivoted during the pandemic and how the new building will be an important site for in person and virtual community and services

- b. Kristine will circulate a draft of the mailer. There will be more discussion about the renovation and the campaign in the coming meetings.
- b. The latest update I have heard on construction progress is that the building will be ready for furniture in September. The building will be done in June, but not furnished in the fall.
  - a. Mara asked if the board can do a tour of the building before it's completely finished.
  - b. Paul offered to help with thinking through the placement of furniture with low vision.

VI. Other

- a. Our new show on ACMI, Arlington 60+ Connection, is in its third month of recordings. It is showing on 4PM on Sundays, 9PM on Tuesdays, and 8AM on Wednesdays. In May we plan on highlighting SNAP with one of our social workers as we are looking to spread the word in helping people apply.
    - a. Kristine can send out the links for the Board to see if folks are interested.
  - b. ACMI is also airing our recorded Exercise Classes, a Senior Cooking Show produced by MCOA and also a talk on the Senior Circuit Breaker this month.
    - a. MCOA gave COA some content to show on ACMI.
    - b. Karen suggested that the phone number doesn't need to be repeated so often because it appears on the screen.
- b. Malcom asked if there might be a vaccine requirement for any events; Kristine said thus far she's heard that it is not legal to make such a requirement. Some other towns are thinking about opening their senior center sooner and they are exploring different ways to get information so that (for contract tracing purposes) the COA could know if someone has been vaccinated.

5. Report of the Chair – there was no report from the Chair.

6. Minuteman Senior Services Report – Marge was not in attendance, so there was report.

7. ASA Liaison Report – Malcolm reported that the ASA office won't open until September when there is furniture.

8. Old Business – Anne Brown went to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Police Civilian Advisory Meeting. Anne will bring back reports of their monthly meeting. Paul asked if there would be a subcommittee on elder issues. Mary asked if there was going to be attention to violence against AAPI individuals. Anne said that the meeting was very introductory and about the charge of the group (and the timeline). There were 5 complaints about the police force last year. Mara raised issues about senior housing and scams that target seniors. In a future meeting we might hear from someone who can talk about diversity, equity and inclusion in Arlington.

9. New Business – In 2010 there were over 9,000 seniors in town; our funding is based on that number. Arlington now has over 12,000 seniors. There was a question as to whether the per person funding would go down. But now it is likely to be level funding.

Mara asked if Kristine could make a formal Board of Selectperson liaison.

Paul asked if we knew what the % of the population of Arlington is over 60. Michael reported that it is roughly 22%. The town population has grown as a whole, so the 22% represents more people than in past years when 60+

10. Other Community Announcements – none

11. Adjourn – Mary made a motion to adjourn, Nancy seconded. The meeting concluded at 6:55.

**Next meeting: May 20, 2021**